

## USACHPPM

# HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

9 July 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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## HOT TOPICS

### Brain Chemical Linked to Teen Suicides in Study

5 July – Reuters reported a brain enzyme known to be involved in mood disorders may be in short supply in the brains of teenage [suicide](#) victims, a finding that could point to possible drug therapy. Whether the lack of the enzyme, protein kinase C (PKC), was a cause or an effect of the mental state that led to suicide was not clear from the post-mortem study of the brains of 34 teenagers, half of whom had committed suicide and the rest who died from other causes. The researchers said the lower levels of the enzyme may be related to abnormalities in the interactions between the brain and hormonal glands. The enzyme is targeted by some mood-stabilizing drugs. Thirty thousand Americans die of suicide annually and it is the second-leading cause of death among U.S. teenagers. [View Article](#)

### Chinese Herbs Hold Little Benefit for Hepatitis C

5 July – Reuters reported a Chinese herbal treatment often used to treat hepatitis in Asia does not appear to reduce liver inflammation or improve quality of life in people with [hepatitis C virus](#) (HCV). The team investigated whether treatment with either a combination of 10 Chinese herbs often used to treat hepatitis in Asia or a placebo drug helped 45 HCV patients. After three months of treatment, herb-takers who participated in the study did not show any change in the amount of virus in their bodies. Researchers noted that the Chinese herbs may have been ineffective either because they simply do not work, or because he and his colleagues used an incorrect dose or combination of herbal agents. [View Article](#)

### Combat Duty, Mental Health Problems, and Barriers to Care

1 July – The New England Journal of Medicine reported that among members of the Army and the Marine Corps who were involved in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, there was a significant risk of mental health problems and that the subjects reported barriers to receiving mental health services, particularly the perception of stigma among those most in need of such care. The current combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have involved U.S. military personnel in major ground combat and hazardous security duty. Four U.S. combat infantry units (three Army units and one Marine Corps unit) were given an anonymous survey that was administered to the subjects either before their deployment to Iraq (n=2530) or three to four months after their return from combat duty in

Iraq or Afghanistan (n=3671). The outcomes included major [depression](#), [generalized anxiety](#), and [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD). Exposure to combat was significantly greater among those who were deployed to Iraq than among those deployed to Afghanistan. The percentage of study subjects with major depression, generalized anxiety, or PTSD was significantly higher after duty in Iraq (15.6 to 17.1 percent) than after duty in Afghanistan (11.2 percent) or before deployment to Iraq (9.3 percent); the largest difference was in the rate of PTSD. Of those whose responses were positive for a mental disorder, only 23 to 40 percent sought mental health care. Those whose responses were positive for a mental disorder were twice as likely as those whose responses were negative to report concern about possible stigmatization and other barriers to seeking mental health care. [View Full Text](#)

## Findings Shed Light on Why Doctors Don't Wash Hands

5 July – Reuters reported having a busy workload and being in a technical medical specialty increase the odds that a physician will not follow hospital handwashing guidelines. Researchers used direct observation and self-report questionnaires to evaluate handwashing factors among 163 physicians at a large university hospital. Adherence with hand hygiene guidelines averaged 57 percent, with internists having the highest rate - 87 percent -- and anesthesiologists having the lowest - 23 percent. Factors associated with sticking to handwashing rules included awareness of being observed, belief of being a role model for other colleagues, a positive attitude toward handwashing after patient contact, and easy access to wash facilities, the authors note. As noted, a high workload and being in a technical specialty like surgery or anesthesiology were identified as predictors of not complying with hand hygiene guidelines. [View Article](#)

## Flu's Fatal Secret Discovered

6 July – News.com.au reported that a team of British scientists has revealed how a bird flu virus that emerged in 1918 became the most deadly infection in history. The lethal turning point came when the [Spanish flu](#) virus altered its surface structure, making it capable of infecting humans as well as birds. It went on to sweep rapidly across the world, felling young people in their prime and claiming up to 50 million lives. Experts monitoring the current outbreaks of avian, or bird flu, in Asia are terrified of a similar pandemic occurring again. The World Health Organisation has recorded 15 human deaths so far in Vietnam and Thailand. However, the virus does not seem to be passing from person to person. The scientists, who studied genetic material from samples taken from Spanish flu victims in the US, have described the three-dimensional shape of the 1918 virus's most potent weapon - proteins that dot its surface and allow it to invade cells. The spike-like hemagglutinins lock onto particular receptor molecules on the surface of cells in the lungs. [View Article](#)

## Generic AIDS Pill as Good as Expensive Combination

2 July – VOA News reported a single dose of an inexpensive AIDS medicine is just as effective as three doses of expensive drugs. The French national agency for AIDS research used a generic medicine manufactured by an Indian pharmaceutical firm. Doctors gave a single pill containing generic versions of three separate drugs to 60 AIDS patients in the West African nation of Cameroon. The patients took the pill twice a day. Six months later, 80 percent of the patients showed no sign of the virus. The researchers say the cheap drugs can help the United Nations reach its goal of treating three million HIV-infected people in developing countries by the end of 2005. [View Article](#)

## Low-Cost Household Water Filter Drastically Cut Diarrhea Rates

*This article is being repeated to insure access to the hyperlinked source.*

28 June – VOA News reported low-cost household water filters cut [diarrhea](#) rates substantially. The simple, low-tech filter systems could help reduce the number of child deaths in places where drinkable tap water is not available or reliable. Diarrhea causes an estimated 2.5 million deaths a year, and one in five child deaths in developing countries. Contaminated water is the main culprit. Researchers showed participants in a rural part of Bolivia how to build a simple water filter system. The filter removed bacteria that cause diarrhea, reducing disease rates by 70 percent. The disease reduction among young children was even better, at 83 percent. Researcher Joseph Brown at the University of North Carolina says people liked the filter system because it also makes their drinking water less cloudy. Brown also says the filter's simplicity was a big benefit. "And that's an important point as far as sustainability goes," he says. The filter systems cost about \$25 each. But while participants liked the filters, they said they were only willing to pay about \$10 for them. [View Article](#)

## Mice May Help Protect Humans in Bio Attacks

1 July – Reuters reported that Australian scientists have identified the immune response that determines why some mice are infected with mousepox and others are not, a discovery that could lead to better protection for humans in a bio-terror attack. Mice that are resistant to mousepox, a close relative of the [smallpox](#) virus, produce three regulatory proteins called cytokines that are absent in mice that become infected. The findings raise the possibility of identifying humans vulnerable to smallpox and targeting vaccination and treatment in the event of an outbreak. Scientists know relatively little about the immune response to smallpox because the virus was eradicated decades ago after a successful worldwide vaccination program. Smallpox was highly contagious and killed around 30 percent of those infected. [View Article](#)

## New Approaches Needed to Fight AIDS as Infection Rate Increases

6 July 2004 – The UN News Centre reported that despite an increase in funding to fight the worldwide spread of [HIV/AIDS](#), last year's infection rate was the highest ever and radical approaches must be devised to reverse the expansion of the disease. The "[2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic](#)" says that in 2003, an estimated 4.8 million people became newly infected with HIV. Some 37.8 million people are now living with AIDS and 20 million have died since the first cases of AIDS were identified in 1981. Whereas those affected by the epidemic were once predominantly male, at least half are now women worldwide. Among southern Africans infected women outnumber infected males by as much as two to one in some age groups. Noting the factors that make women more vulnerable, the report says adolescent girls must have access to information and services, violence against women must not be tolerated, women must have property rights and access to prevention. [View Article](#)

## New Surgical Technique Could Mean Faster Recovery

7 July - Reuters reported that a new surgical technique may help doctors operate on internal organs without making any cuts in the skin, researchers reported on Wednesday. Using a flexible mini-telescope called an endoscope, surgeons said they could go in through a patient's mouth and make a cut in the stomach wall to reach abdominal organs. They believe such a method will allow patients to heal more quickly after surgery. Tests on animals showed they could get through the stomach wall and the thin membrane surrounding the stomach called the peritoneum to repair the intestines, liver, pancreas, gall bladder and uterus. They call the new method flexible transgastric peritoneoscopy. Researchers said, "The technique is less invasive than even laparoscopy because we don't have to cut through the skin and muscle of the abdomen, and it may prove a viable alternate to existing surgical procedures." [View Article](#)

## SARS May Raise Risk of Tuberculosis

2 July – Reuters reported the discovery of [tuberculosis](#) (TB) in two patients with [SARS](#) raises concern that SARS may somehow increase susceptibility to TB. The occurrence of two cases of TB among 236 patients with probable SARS far exceeds the TB rates typically seen in the general population of Singapore. In both cases, TB only came to light after full recovery from SARS, when the patients developed persistent lung symptoms and worsening chest X-ray findings. It is "highly likely," the team notes, that both patients developed TB after acquiring SARS. The investigators suggest that the SARS coronavirus temporarily suppresses the immune system making it harder for people to fight off the TB microbe if exposure occurs. [View Article](#)

## Scientists: Bird Flu Threat Permanent

7 July – The Washington Times reported that Hong Kong scientists have admitted publicly what they have worried about privately: Asia may never be free of [bird flu](#) and it may soon spread to humans. The warning came as China, Thailand and Vietnam all found chickens dying of the disease again in the past week. Hans Wagner, senior animal production and health officer in southeast Asia for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, said he was not surprised bird flu was back. "The geographic distribution and the incidence were so high," he said, "you will never be able to eradicate it from wildlife." A World Health Organization official also said the agency was investigating an unconfirmed media report that a person died of bird flu in Vietnam's Mekong Delta recently. The reemergence of the virus coincides with an article in Nature, a British science journal, by Chinese researchers who say bird flu is firmly rooted in domesticated ducks in southern China -- and that the possibility of mutations raises the specter of a human bird flu pandemic. [View Source](#)

## Syphilis Strain Resisting Drug

8 July - IndyStar.com reported that a fast-spreading mutant strain of [syphilis](#) has proved resistant to the antibiotic pills that are offered to some patients as an alternative to painful penicillin shots. Since the late 1990s, doctors and public health clinics have been giving azithromycin to some syphilis patients because the long-acting antibiotic pill was highly effective and easy to use. Four pills taken at once were usually enough to cure syphilis. Now researchers have found at least 10 percent of syphilis samples from patients at sexually transmitted disease clinics in four cities had a strain resistant to azithromycin. The percentage of samples from San Francisco with the mutant strain jumped from 4 percent in 1999-2002 to 37 percent in 2003, with the increase taking place largely among gay or bisexual men with multiple partners. [View Source](#)

# Focus on Epidemiology

## Rabies Transmission from Organ Transplants

1 July – MMWR reported that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed the first reported cases of [rabies](#) transmission through solid organ transplantation. Confirmation came from laboratory testing of autopsy specimens after the deaths of three persons who had received organ transplants from the same donor. Rabies is an acute, fatal disease that most often results from the bite of a rabid mammal. Although rabies transmission has occurred previously through cornea transplants, this is the first report of rabies transmission via solid organ transplantation. The organ donor had undergone routine donor eligibility screening and testing. Rabies testing is not part of the routine screening process. Lungs, kidneys, and liver were recovered and later transplanted into four

recipients, one of whom (the lung transplant patient) died during transplant surgery. No other organs or tissues were recovered from the donor. CDC is working with health officials from Texas, Alabama, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and other public health partners to evaluate potential contacts of the transplant recipients and the donor to determine who needs shots. Those persons include family members as well as healthcare workers who cared for the organ recipients and donor at several hospitals. Individuals whose contact is determined to have placed them at elevated risk of exposure to rabies virus will be advised to receive post-exposure treatment as soon as possible. [View Report](#)

## DoD-GEIS: Secure Public Health Intranet Communications

6 July - Public health systems need to communicate confidential information quickly and accurately. [Epi-X](#) is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s web-based communications solution for public health professionals. Through *Epi-X*, CDC officials, state health departments, and other public health professionals can access and share preliminary health surveillance information --- quickly and securely. Users can also be actively notified of breaking health events as they occur. Key features of *Epi-X* include controlled user access, digital credentials and authentication, rapid outbreak reporting, and CDC-assisted coordination of investigations. Access to *Epi-X* is limited to designated officials by each health agency to ensure the security necessary for the exchange of preliminary information. These experts are engaged in identifying, investigating, and responding to health threats. Currently, *Epi-X* has over 1200 users. Each military official *Epi-X* user must obtain pre-approval from the appropriate military health agency. Once pre-approval has been obtained, *Epi-X* staff provides additional information about getting set up on the system. Public health professionals interested in participating in the program can contact *Epi-X* at [epixhelp@cdc.gov](mailto:epixhelp@cdc.gov). DoD-GEIS can facilitate this process upon request at [joseph.malone2@us.army.mil](mailto:joseph.malone2@us.army.mil). Generally, DoD users up until now have been readers of the information on Epi-X along with other civilian public health officials, but unlike civilian users, do not share information or alerts on this confidential web site. Confidential information about DoD epidemiological investigations is being posted on a password protected site hosted by DoD-GEIS at <https://fhp.osd.mil/portal/geis/>; passwords can be requested for "dot-mil" authorized military healthcare workers at [jay.mansfield@NA.AMEDD.ARMY.MIL](mailto:jay.mansfield@NA.AMEDD.ARMY.MIL). Over time, DoD-GEIS will emulate Epi-X features at the DoD secure site. *Information on many "hot topics" such as WNV, Influenza (avian and human), Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#).*

### ***Other timely information can be found in:***

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#)

This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#)

## USCENTCOM

### Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever in South Sudan - WHO Update 8

6 July – ProMED reported the health authorities in Yambio County have reassessed the number of cases of [Ebola hemorrhagic fever](#) (EHF), in view of additional laboratory results from the WHO Collaborating Centre at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United States. As a result of the reclassification, 17 cases and 7 deaths of EHF have now been reported. 13 of the cases are laboratory-confirmed and 4 are epidemiologically linked. The most recent death reported occurred on 26 June in the Yambio hospital isolation ward, and no further cases have been reported since

then. Contact follow-up in Yambio County is no longer being carried out as the last case was reported and isolated on 14 June. Surveillance and social mobilization activities are continuing. [View Article](#)

## Iraq: Successful Measles Vaccination Campaign

5 July –IRIN News.org reported that an anti-[measles](#) campaign in Iraq has been successful in immunizing 97 percent of targeted children. The task was carried out under difficult circumstances and amid deteriorating security following an outbreak of the highly contagious and killer disease in the southern governorates at the start of the year. It affected more than 1,000 school children, the group most at risk. The Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) organized the catch-up campaign that targeted 5.2 million children aged between six and 12. UNICEF provided vaccines, syringes and supplies, while WHO assisted in the planning of the campaign and guided the MoH team in the development of campaign materials such as messages for TV, radio and newspapers. The world health body also conducted training for the immunization teams and for 450 Iraqi Red Crescent Society volunteers that monitored and evaluated the campaign. [View Article](#)

## Kazakhstan: Anthrax and Hemorrhagic Fever Cases Confirmed

6 July – IRIN News.org reported that seven people in the north of the country have been hospitalized with [anthrax](#) contracted from infected cattle, while in the south three cases of [Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever](#) (CCHF) have been confirmed. The hospitalized patients took part in slaughtering a calf that had died of a mysterious disease. "The calf had blood running out of its nose and they slaughtered it without notifying the veterinary service and getting a sanitary certificate," Albert Askarov, deputy head of the sanitary and epidemiological control committee explained. "The patients' condition is now good as they have a mild form of anthrax," he said.

Three cases of CCHF have been registered in the south over the past week. "Three provinces, including Southern Kazakhstan, Zhambyl and Kzyl-Orda are natural foci for CCHF. Every year dozens of cases are registered there. This year only three cases have been officially registered in these three provinces as we carried out prophylactic measures before the epidemic period to eliminate ticks - vectors of the disease. Within three weeks the epidemic period will be over and then ticks will disappear," Askarov said. [View Article](#)

## Leptospirosis - Kenya

7 July – ProMED reported that more medical personnel, including three doctors from Kakamega Provincial Hospital, have been dispatched to Webuye following the fresh outbreak of swamp fever ([leptospirosis](#)). The Western Provincial Medical Officer, Dr. Olang'o Onudi, said that 90 patients have been admitted to the Webuye sub-district hospital in the last 2 days. Onudi, however, described the situation as stable, and noted that a team of public health officials were sensitizing the residents regarding hygiene in an effort to contain the outbreak. The disease has, so far, claimed 13 lives including 2 students of Chesamis High School. Onudi said that, of the 90 patients currently admitted to Webuye hospital, 22 are students from Chesamis High School and 12 are from Matulo Primary School. A pupil from the primary school died last week. However, he said they were still waiting for the results of the blood samples taken from the patients to establish the real nature of the disease. He said that the symptoms of the disease include extreme fever and headache. Onudi said diagnosis indicates that some of those admitted were suffering from malaria and typhoid. [View Article](#)

## Malaria Outbreak Leaves 25 People Dead in District

6 July – AllAfrica.com reported that 25 people have died following an outbreak of [malaria](#) in West Pokot District in Nairobi, Kenya in the last three weeks. An official of Kapenguria District Hospital said

17 children and eight adults died from the disease between mid-June and this week. The Kapenguria Medical Officer of Health, Dr Samson Kiprono, refuted the claims saying only five people had died. "About 8,500 patients were treated in June," he said. The upsurge of malaria cases in the highland areas was blamed on the short rains that provided a favorable environment for mosquitoes to breed fast. Since January, 30,000 malaria patients have been treated in the district. [View Source](#)

## Uzbekistan: Fear of Plague Leads to Tighter Border with Turkmenistan

7 July - IRIN News.org reported that Tashkent is tightening border controls and migration to prevent the possible spread of plague from neighboring Turkmenistan. Recent media reports claim that there have been cases of plague in the northern Turkmen province of Dashoguz, bordering Uzbekistan. [Plague](#) is an infectious disease of animals and humans caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*. It is transmitted to humans through the bite of a flea carrying the bacterium or by handling an infected animal. According to the Uzbek Health Ministry, some staff members of its quarantine and contagious infections service and 28 epidemiological teams were now working in the steppe areas bordering Turkmenistan. In an effort to avert plague, cattle breeders, geologists and oil workers have been vaccinated against plague along with some 15,000 camels in the region. [View Article](#)

## USEUCOM

### Central African Republic: New Treatment for Sleeping Sickness

5 July – IRIN News reported health authorities have introduced a new treatment for [trypanosomiasis](#) (sleeping sickness) in the eastern province of Haut Mbomou in the Central African Republic (CAR). Haut Mbomou has had the highest prevalence rate of trypanosomiasis (1.8 percent) since 2001. Dr Carlos Recio, the coordinator of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in the CAR, said that the change to Eflornithine from Melarsoprol, an arsenic by-product discovered in the 1940s, had been made because the latter "has dangerous side effects on the patients with death risk of 5 percent". Moreover, Recio said, 21 percent of patients under Melarsoprol had developed resistance to the drug. MSF recently completed trypanosomiasis screening in the town of Zemio in Haut Mbomou, where 30,000 people or 85 percent of the total population were screened and 0.93 percent found to be affected. [View Article](#)

### *E. coli* Outbreak in Northeastern England

4 July – The Washington Times reported that health officials in Britain are investigating an outbreak of [E. coli](#) in northeastern England that has left four people hospitalized. Dr. Deb Wilson, chairwoman of the Outbreak Control Team, said a butcher shop in Durham County might be the source of the bacteria. *E. coli* -- bacteria found in the intestines of healthy animals, which can contaminate meat or milk during slaughtering or milking -- can cause mild diarrhea, but can also lead to severe illness causing kidney damage. It can be deadly for very young and very old people, or those with compromised immune systems. [View Article](#)

### Guinea Worm Ravages Kebbi, Lagos

1 July – AllAfrica.com reported that seventeen new cases of [Guinea worm disease](#) have been reported in Danko/Wasagu Local Government Area of Kebbi State, Lagos. Governor Adamu Aliero said the state government was committed to the total eradication of the infection in the state and directed the formation of a monitoring committee for effective coverage of the area. [View Article](#)

## Nigeria: WHO Investigates Suspected Polio Outbreak in Kano

5 July – IRIN News reported the World Health Organization (WHO) was investigating a suspected rash of new [polio](#) cases in Kano state which stopped vaccinating people last year amid fears that the campaign formed part of a Western plot to reduce the Muslim population of Nigeria. A WHO official said that the organization had dispatched a team to the town of Rogo, 100 km southwest of Kano to investigate the suspected outbreak. The news of a suspected polio outbreak in northern Nigeria came less than a fortnight after U.N. health experts warned the crippling disease was spreading at an alarming pace and that West and Central Africa was "on the brink of the largest polio epidemic in recent years." A local government official said between 20 and 30 suspected cases of polio had been recorded over the past four weeks in Rogo and the surrounding district. [View Article](#)

## Rwanda: Typhoid Kills Four, 540 Others in Hospital

1 July – IRIN News.org reported that four people have died and 540 others have been hospitalized following an outbreak of [typhoid fever](#) in northwestern Rwanda. Desire Ndushabandi, the health ministry's secretary-general, said the outbreak, which began two weeks ago, was due to poor hygiene practices, especially drinking untreated water. The northwestern province of Ruhengeri, with an estimated population of 900,000, is the most affected. He said his ministry was carrying out epidemiological surveillance, and was holding meetings with local leaders and the public to curb the spread of the disease. [View Article](#)

# USNORTHCOM

## CDC, Manufacturers Aim for More Flu Shots This Year

2 July - CIDRAP reported that more Americans are being told to seek [flu](#) vaccination and more vaccine will be available in the coming influenza season. Experts have recommended that 6- to 23-month-old children be vaccinated. In addition, healthcare workers will be more strongly advised than before to get their flu shots. Only about 35% of healthcare workers currently get vaccinated. To avoid a repeat of last year's flu-shot shortage, drug companies are making more than 100 million doses of vaccine, about 13 million more doses than they did last year. As announced by the Department of Health and Human Services early this year, the agency will spend about \$80 million in the next 2 years to stockpile another 4 million or 5 million doses a year for uninsured and underinsured children eligible for the Vaccines for Children Program. [View Article](#)

## Malaria Outbreak

3 July – The Boca Raton News reported that at least one Palm Beach County resident has been diagnosed with [malaria](#). The victim likely contracted the disease in early June, according to health officials, who now fear that the victim may have infected mosquitoes. Once a mosquito is infected, it becomes a carrier of the disease and spreads it. With South Florida residents likely to spend a majority of time outside, the potential for the disease to spread is high. Health officials are warning residents who plan to be outside to use a bug spray that contains DEET. Malaria symptoms include headache, aching bones, vomiting, teeth chattering chills and high fever. [View Article](#)

## Measles Outbreak: 50 People Get Vaccinated Against Virus

7 July – Metro West Daily News reported that about 50 more Franklin, Massachusetts residents received [measles](#) vaccinations, bringing to 250 the total number of Berson Family YMCA members who have received the vaccine in the last week. The YMCA offered shots to members after the state Department of Public Health confirmed a case of measles in a 14-month-old area girl who is a club member and who was contagious when she attended. Dr. Alfred DeMaria, the department's director of communicable diseases, said the girl is in good condition and no new cases of measles have been reported. Last week, public health officials identified about 370 children, out of 8,000 total YMCA members, who were at the highest risk of exposure to the measles virus. [View Article](#)

## More Military Personnel to Get Anthrax and Smallpox Shots

1 July - CIDRAP reported that more US troops and civilian defense workers serving overseas will be getting [smallpox](#) and [anthrax](#) vaccinations in coming months. DoD officials ordered vaccinations for uniformed personnel and some civilian and contract workers serving in South Korea. They also ordered an expansion of vaccinations in the Central Command Area to include all uniformed personnel. William Winkenwerder, Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, cited an increase in vaccine supplies as the reason for expanding the program. DoD reports that about 1.1 million people have received anthrax shots since the [Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program](#) began in March 1998. Vaccination involves six shots over 18 months, plus annual boosters afterward. More than 627,000 service members have received smallpox shots since the [Smallpox Vaccination Program](#) began in December 2002, according to DoD reports. [View Article](#) [View News Release](#)

## Overtime Hikes Nursing Errors

7 July – Reuters reported that nurses in U.S. hospitals are working long shifts that raise the risk of medical mistakes. The likelihood of a hospital nurse making a mistake was three times higher once a shift stretched past 12.5 hours. The study tracked 393 hospital nurses and found about 40 percent of their shifts exceeded 12.5 hours over a four-week period. Working more than 40 hours per week or working unscheduled overtime also made errors more likely. During the 5,317 shifts reviewed, there were 199 medical errors. Most were medication errors such as administering the wrong drug or the wrong dose, or giving medication later than scheduled. Working overtime raised the chances of making at least one error, regardless of how long the shift was originally scheduled to last. On average, the nurses worked 55 minutes longer than scheduled each day. [View Article](#)

## Serious E. Coli Outbreak in Bronx Day Care Center

1 July – ABC Local News reported that there has been an [E. coli](#) outbreak at a Bronx day care center. The Health Department confirmed four cases, and suspects 18 more. All but one of the children attended the Bronx day care center. At least two children remain hospitalized. The day care center was locked down and disinfected when one child after another got sick. *E. coli* is often seen in day care centers and schools, where children are often careless about hand washing. *E. coli* affects the kidney and causes renal damage, and possible renal failure. Dr. Thomas Frieden, NYC Health Commissioner said, "This particular strain of bacteria can be fatal. Fortunately, all of the children are doing well at this point." [View Article](#)

## U.S. Study Examines Why Some Children Not Vaccinated

6 July – Reuters reported that struggling, inner-city parents are more likely to neglect to completely vaccinate their children, while parents who refuse to vaccinate at all tend to be white and well-off. By

the time they are 3 years old, U.S. children are supposed to get at least 15 different shots. These include combined vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough, three doses of polio vaccine, one dose of combined measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine, three doses of *Haemophilus influenzae* type B vaccine and others for hepatitis B and chickenpox. In 2001, only 62.8 percent of all children aged 19 to 35 months were fully vaccinated. More than 2 million children or 36.9 percent of toddlers were not fully vaccinated in 2001, and 17,000 children or 0.3 percent were not vaccinated at all. As a result, there have been outbreaks of [measles](#) and [polio](#) in the United States. Both viruses can be crippling and even deadly. [View Article](#)

## U.S. Warns of Reactions to Permanent Makeup Ink

2 July – Reuters reported a type of ink used to apply permanent makeup has been linked to cases of serious disfigurement. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said it had received more than 50 reports of reactions to certain ink shades made by Premier Products, and the inks were sold under the Premier Pigments brand. Reactions reported to the FDA include swelling, cracking, peeling, blistering and scarring around the eyes and lips, as well as granulomas, which are lumps of inflamed tissue. In some cases, the reactions caused serious disfigurement that resulted in difficulty eating and talking. Premier Pigments said allergic reactions were a risk with all permanent cosmetic and tattoo procedures. The company recalled five ink shades in July 2003, the FDA said. The agency continued to receive reports of reactions involving shades not subject to the recall, the FDA said. "Premier Pigments will continue to work in unison with the FDA to do everything necessary to inform and maintain the safety of the public," Sandi Hammons, president of Premier Pigments, said in a statement. The agency urged consumers and health-care providers to report reactions from tattoos and permanent makeup to the FDA as well as state and local health authorities. [View Article](#)

## USPACOM

### Dengue Outbreak in Terengganu

3 July – New Straits Times reported that local councils have been directed to take immediate precautionary measures against a [dengue](#) outbreak in the Setiu district of Terengganu, Malaysia. State Public Administration, Local Government, Housing and Health committee chairman Takiyuddin Hassan said a meeting with the heads of all local authorities would be held tomorrow to discuss further measures. In Permaisuri, Setiu, 96 people were warded at the district hospital following a dengue outbreak there. [View Article](#)

### Impure Water Causing Illness in Bangladesh

2 July – Bangladesh-web reported a flu-like virus has been gradually spreading in the country causing fever with acute diarrhea. The spate of flu-attacks came in the wake of intermittent rains that caused flash floods in many areas of the country and scarcity of pure drinking water. Dhaka's low-lying areas were also underwater following heavy showers during the past two weeks. Children and newborns are particularly vulnerable to the disease, with high fevers, running noses and flushed faces. Dr. M. Abid Hossain, a pediatrician at Dhaka Medical College Hospital reported that 70 to 80 per cent of his patients last week came in with flu-like symptoms. Although flu remits within three or four days, doctors have advised patients to be cautious about the recent reappearance of [dengue](#) fever. According to the Department of Disease Control of Health Directorate, "the mosquito vector borne communicable infectious viral febrile disease dengue is an emerging public health problem in Bangladesh since the first outbreak in 2000." Dr. Abid also said, "that [typhoid](#) is now also at a risk

condition for the children, which attacks following continuous high fever. But drugs necessary for typhoid treatment are expensive, so they can't afford good treatment." [View Article](#)

## New Zealand Launches Vaccination Program To Combat Meningitis

7 July – Canada.com reported that New Zealand will launch a mass immunization program next month, targeting 1.5 million young people in a bid to combat a [meningitis B](#) outbreak which has killed more than 200 people in the past 13 years. Announcing the mass inoculation, Health Minister Annette King said that at least 90 per cent of all people under the age of 20 will be vaccinated, starting in the high-risk poorer outer suburbs of Auckland, the nation's biggest city. "The epidemic has shown no signs of abating, but now the vaccine has received approval we can begin to fight back," King said.

## Polio Case Detected in Mumbai, India

4 July – ProMED reported that just when the city thought it had eradicated [polio](#), comes the news that an infant from a slum in Dindoshi, Malad east, has tested positive for the wild polio virus. "This detection means Mumbai, which was polio-free for 3 years, will have to face another rigorous anti-polio drive for the next 3 years," said an official. To get polio-free status, any area or country should not have a case for 3 consecutive years. About 1.1 million children in Mumbai will be given the oral polio vaccine as part of the fifth pulse polio drive since October. [View Source](#)

## Second Senior Health Official in Hong Kong Resigns Over SARS Crisis

8 July – WTEV.com reported that the second senior health official in Hong Kong has stepped down over the handling of the SARS crisis. Hong Kong's Hospital Authority Chairman Dr. Leong Che-hung said he resigned to demonstrate the spirit of political accountability, but he stressed that the authority had made "no mistakes" in fighting the disease that killed hundreds and caused months of uncertainty and fear in the territory. Hong Kong's Health Secretary, Dr. Yeoh Eng-kiong, resigned Wednesday, becoming a rare political casualty in a territory where critics charge that top aides of Hong Kong's leader, Tung Chee-hwa, often avoid being held accountable for problems. Yeoh ran into trouble this week after a legislative report blamed him for many failures in the fight against severe acute respiratory syndrome. SARS infected 1,755 people in Hong Kong and killed 299 of them as health workers and hospital administrators scrambled to understand and contain the disease that didn't even have a name when it came in February 2003 from mainland China. [View Source](#)

## Top Chinese Disease Expert Quits Over SARS Outbreak

1 July – Radio Free Asia reported that China's top disease-control official has resigned over the deadly [SARS](#) outbreak in April linked to a Beijing laboratory. Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention director Li Liming stepped down for "mismanagement of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus" at China's most important infectious disease laboratory. Officials said poor lab safety management and irregular operations by professionals resulted in the pollution of a laboratory and SARS virus infection of some lab staff members. The Diarrhea Virus Laboratory under the Institute of Virus Diseases of the center was found to have conducted SARS virus research adopting untested methods to kill the virus in an ordinary lab, it said. The also lab failed to report unusual health conditions among staff. [View Article](#)

## Vietnam Braces for Second Wave of Bird Flu

8 July - SeattlePI.com reported that as China and Thailand grapple with fresh [bird flu](#) outbreaks, Vietnam is bracing for the possible resurgence of the disease that killed 16 people earlier this year.

China and Thailand undertook massive poultry culls this week after both countries confirmed fresh bird flu outbreaks. Small, sporadic outbreaks have been reported in six Vietnamese provinces over the past three months, forcing the cull of 10,000 birds. Lab tests have yet to confirm the strain of the virus. Vietnam stood by its decision to declare itself bird-flu free in March when it received criticism from United Nations' health and agriculture officials who warned the announcement was premature and that the virus would likely return. Farmers in Bac Lieu province, where more than 5,000 chickens from three farms died in an outbreak last month, were warned by provincial health officials not to travel outside their villages for 10 days after the cull. In China, officials suspect that waterfowl or migrating birds visiting a lake in Anhui province might be spreading the disease. [View Article](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

### Bolivia: Outbreak of Bolivian Hemorrhagic Fever in Beni, Itenez Province

2 July – ProMED reported that the National Health Information System of the Ministry of Health and Sports of Bolivia reported the occurrence of two cases of [Bolivian hemorrhagic fever](#) (BHF) in the Department of Beni, Itenez Province, an endemic area for BHF. The two patients, aged 30 and 16, died between 11 and 17 June 2004; to date, no more human cases have been reported in the above areas. The health authorities are undertaking control actions, capturing rodents, and actively seeking cases in the affected areas, as well as using rodent-killers in urban areas of the endemic zone. [View Source](#)

### FAM: Contained in Brazil; Outbreak in Ecuador

7 July – MercoPress reported Argentina lifted the ban on meat imports from fifteen Brazilian states, which was imposed June 23, following the outbreak of a foot and mouth disease (FAM) case in the northern state of Para. "Imports are allowed from all those states that have been recognized as free of FAM with vaccination by the Paris-based International Organization of Epizooties", said a spokesperson from the Argentine office that monitors sanitary and quality conditions of food. Reports from the Brazilian government indicate that the states involved have adopted the necessary measures to ensure the condition of free of FAM with vaccination. In related news, Ecuadorian sanitary authorities say they are considering establishing an emergency area in the interior of the country after two cases tested positive for FAM, Three others are waiting for further testing. [View Article](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hioupdate/>.

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